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Record U.S. delegation attends OSCE PA session in St. Petersburg

by Ron McNamara

A bipartisan congressional delegation participated in the Eighth Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), hosted by the Russian Parliament, the Federation Council and the State Duma, in St. Petersburg, Russia July 6-10. The U.S. delegation, headed by Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), included 14 Members of the House of Representatives and three United States Senators. Participants were: Chairman Smith, Co-Chairman Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO), Ranking Member Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), Commissioners Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Matt Salmon (R-AZ), Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), and Louise McIntosh Slaughter (D-NY), Senator George V. Voinovich (R-OH), Representatives Martin Olav Sabo (D-MN), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Thomas C. Sawyer (D-OH), Cliff Stearns (R-FL), John S. Tanner (D-TN), Pat Danner (D-MO), Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL), Dr. John Cooksey (R-LA), and Tom Tancredo (R-CO). The delegation filled the 17 seats allocated to the United States and demonstrated Congress' continued commitment to Europe.

This year's Assembly brought together about 275 parliamentarians from 52 OSCE participating States. Seven countries, including the Russian Federation, were represented at the level of Speaker of Parliament or President of the Senate. The Assembly continued to recognize the democratically

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*The U.S. delegation at St. Petersburg,
in the front row (l to r):
Delegation Vice Chairman
Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO),
Delegation Chairman
Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) and
OSCE Vice President
Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD)*



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elected parliament of Belarus which President Lukashenka dissolved following his illegal power grab in 1996.

The inaugural ceremony included welcoming addresses by the Speaker of the State Duma, Gennady Seleznev, and the Governor of St. Petersburg, Vladimir Yakovlev. The President of the Assembly, Helle Degn of Denmark, presided.

Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek of Norway addressed the Assembly in his capacity of OSCE Chairman-in-Office to report on the organization's activities, particularly those relating to post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction in Kosovo. Vollebaek urged the Parliamentary Assembly and its members to play an active role in promoting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Kosovo. Considerable attention throughout the discussions on Kosovo was given to the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe.

Members of the U.S. delegation actively participated in a special plenary session on Kosovo and contributed to a draft resolution concerning the situation in Kosovo. The delegation was successful in securing adoption of several amendments: underscoring the legal obligation of States to cooperate with the International

Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia; granting access to all prisoners by the International Committee of the Red Cross; extending humanitarian assistance to other parts of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and supporting democracy in Serbia and Montenegro. The adoption of language which supports not only the condemnation but sanctioning of countries giving safe haven to persons indicted for war crimes was particularly noteworthy. A separate US initiative that stressed the urgent need to support infrastructure projects which would benefit neighboring countries in the Balkans region was widely supported and adopted unanimously.

Two major U.S. initiatives in St. Petersburg were a resolution on the trafficking of women and children for the sex trade and a memorial resolution on the assassination of Galina Starovoitova, a Russian parliamentarian and an outspoken advocate of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Russia who was murdered late last year. The trafficking resolution appeals to participating States to create legal and enforcement mechanisms to punish traffickers while protecting the rights of the trafficking victims. The resolution on the assassination called on the Russian Govern-



A view of the 8th Annual OSCE PA Session, held in St. Petersburg, Russia, in the same building where the first Russian Duma convened in 1905.

ment to use every appropriate avenue to bring Galina Starovoitova's murderers to justice. Both items received overwhelming support and were included in the St. Petersburg Declaration adopted during the closing plenary.

Work in the Assembly's three General Committees—Political Affairs and Security; Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment; and Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions—focused on the central theme: "Common Security and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century."

Mr. Hastings played a particularly active role in his capacity as Rapporteur for the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security. His draft report and resolution served as the basis for much of the committee's work. The U.S. delegation pressed for greater transparency with respect to OSCE activities in Vienna, urging that meetings of the Permanent Council be open to the public and media. Considerable discussion focused on the Assembly's long-standing recommendation to modify the consensus rule that governs all decisions taken by the OSCE. During the closing session, Mr. Hastings was unanimously elected committee Vice Chairman.

Members offered several amendments to the draft resolution considered by the General Committee on Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and Environment. Two U.S. amendments focused on the importance of combating corruption and organized crime, offering concrete proposals for the establishment of high-level, inter-agency, corruption-fighting mechanisms in each of the OSCE participating States as well as the convening of a ministerial meeting to promote cooperation among these States to combat corruption and organized crime. Other amendments offered by the U.S. delegation, and adopted, highlighted the importance of reform of the agricultural sector, bolstering food security in the context of sustainable development, and regulation of capital and labor markets by multilateral organizations.

The Rapporteur's report for the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions focused on the improvement of the human rights situation in the new independent states. Amendments proposed by the U.S. delegation, and adopted by the Assembly, stressed the need for participating States to fully implement their commitments to prevent discrimination on

the grounds of religion or belief and condemned statements by parliamentarians of OSCE participating States promoting or supporting racial or ethnic hatred, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Other U.S. amendments that were approved advocated the establishment of permanent Central Election Commissions in emerging democracies and emphasized the need for the governments of the OSCE participating States to act to ensure that refugees and displaced persons have the right to return to their homes and to regain their property or receive compensation.

An ambitious series of bilateral meetings were held between Members of the U.S. delegation and representatives from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Turkey, France, Romania, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, and the United Kingdom. While in St. Petersburg, the delegation met with Aleksandr Nikitin, a former Soviet navy captain being prosecuted for his investigative work exposing nuclear storage problems and resulting radioactive contamination in the area around Murmansk. In addition, the delegation hosted a reception at the U.S. Consul General's residence for representatives of non-governmental

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organizations and U.S. businesses active in the Russian Federation.

Elections for officers of the Assembly were held during the final plenary. Ms. Helle Degn of Denmark was re-elected President. Mr. Bill Graham of Canada was elected Treasurer. Four of the Assembly's nine Vice-Presidents were elected: Mr. Claude Estier (France), Mr. Bruce George (U.K.), Mr. Ihor Ostach (Ukraine), and Mr. Tiit Kabin (Estonia). Mr. Hoyer's current term as Vice-President runs through 2001.

Finally, the Standing Committee agreed that the Ninth Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will be held next July in Bucharest, Romania. □



Delegation Chairman and Commission Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) addresses the OSCE PA on trafficking of women and children for sexual purposes



Co-Chairman Campbell, Commissioner Hutchison and other members of the U.S. delegation meet with American business representatives in St. Petersburg: (l to r) Senator Hutchison (third from left), Mr. Tancredo, Senator Campbell, Senator Voinovich



(l to r) Co-Chairman Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO), Commissioner Patrick A. Mulloy, Department of Commerce, and Commissioner Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-VA) examine corruption in the OSCE region

Senator Campbell convenes hearing on bribery and corruption in the OSCE region

by Marlene Kaufmann

On July 21, Co-Chairman Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO) convened a Commission hearing to examine the issue of bribery and corruption in the OSCE region. The hearing assessed the breadth and depth of this problem within the area encompassed by the OSCE participating States, its impact on the developing market economies, and strategies to combat bribery and corruption through the OSCE and other regional and international organizations. The lead witness was newly appointed Commissioner, Assistant Secretary of Commerce Patrick Mulloy who later joined Senator Campbell on the dias as a member of the Commission. Also testifying were Dr. John Sullivan, Executive Director of the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE); Dr. Louise Shelley, Director of the Transnational Crime and Corruption Center at American University; Lucinda Low of Transparency International, and Mr. Peter Grinenko, President of Staysafe Research Corporation.

In his opening remarks, Senator Campbell pointed out that “rampant corruption and organized crime in the region encompassed by the 54 OSCE participating States has cost U.S. business firms billions of dollars in lost contracts abroad with direct implications for our economy here at home. Bribery and corruption have an overall chilling effect on much needed foreign investment in the transitional countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the New Independent States.” While these issues confront virtually all nations, Senator Campbell explained that a

review of the situation in this region was critical because “beyond the pure economic impact, official and unofficial corruption are an affront to the core principles of the OSCE: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Given the strategic importance of the OSCE region to the United States, it is essential that we provide critical leadership in combating organized crime and corruption, if genuine democracy and market economies are to take firm root there.” Senator Campbell suggested that the comprehensive nature and membership of the OSCE make it ideally suited to contribute to this effort. “If the OSCE could make a major contribution in promoting military transparency and openness during the Cold War, as it did, then certainly it should be able to undertake a similar effort in the economic dimension.” he said.

Commissioner Mulloy’s testimony focused on current U.S. Government efforts to combat bribery and systemic corruption. He took the opportunity to present the Department of Commerce’s annual report on implementation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Anti-Bribery Convention, which makes it a crime for citizens and companies to bribe officials of another country and mandates the disallowance of tax deductions for such bribes. The treaty was signed by thirty-four countries, many of whom are OSCE participating States as well as Argentina, Brazil and Chile. This report, prepared under Secretary Mulloy’s direction

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(l to r), Peter Grinenko, Lucinda Low, Dr. Louise Shelley and Dr. John Sullivan before the Commission

and in cooperation with the Department of Commerce's Office of General Counsel, the State, Justice and Treasury Departments, and the Securities and Exchange Commission, reviews progress on implementing and enforcing the OECD Convention, including an examination of laws criminalizing bribes to foreign public officials and disallowing the tax deductibility of bribes. Mulloy also described an array of other U.S. initiatives to combat bribery and corruption by improving the transparency of governmental processes and strengthening the rule of law. The United States is actively working to conclude a WTO Agreement on Transparency in Government Procurement, he said, as well as actively working with governments in the OSCE region to support legal and regulatory reform, combat commercial crime, and encourage trade and economic reform.

The second panel of expert witnesses drew on their experience in business, law and academia to assess the issue and recommend additional steps that could be taken in the long-term battle against corruption and organized crime. Dr. John Sullivan of CIPE, which is an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, shared the experience of one of its partner organizations in Ecuador which engaged government officials and leaders of the business and NGO communities to examine causes of corruption in that country and produce specific recommendations to eliminate the problem in six priority areas. The organization's recommendations have been included in the new constitution of Ecuador and a permanent independent commission has been established to oversee reforms.

Transparency International (TI), represented by Lucinda Low, is the leading non-governmental organization in the anti-corruption movement. TI publishes an annual "Corruption Perceptions Index" which ranks countries from least to most corrupt according to perceptions of business people and others active there. Ms. Low presented the rankings of the OSCE countries and discussed the impact of the OECD and Council of Europe treaties aimed at combating corruption. Noting that the fight against corruption ultimately depends on a combination of legal, economic, societal and cultural factors, Ms. Low recommended that a broad governmental and law reform agenda, including an educational initiative and efforts to strengthen civil society, should be pursued in the OSCE countries.

Dr. Louise Shelley of the Transnational Crime and Corruption Center at American University focused on the countries of the former Soviet Union. Calling for holistic and comprehensive strategies to combat corruption, she noted that the problem cannot be addressed only through targeted programs, but that anti-corruption measures must be incorporated in all bilateral assistance programs. Dr. Shelley also called for more compliance and oversight in World Bank and IMF policies and more expeditious implementation of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention.

Mr. Peter Grinenko described his experiences both as a police detective investigating the activities of Russian organized crime in the United States, and as an owner of businesses in Latvia, Russia and Ukraine. He described how he was forced to make a choice between closing these business operations or undertaking the corrupt ac-

tivities necessary to continue to operate in the region. He chose the former at great personal expense. Mr. Grinenko believes that corruption in the formerly communist states does not just occur in government, nor is it a problem alone of trying to conduct business, but rather corruption is a part of the society and is perceived as a means of survival. He was perhaps the most pessimistic of the panel in his assessment of making progress in this battle in the future. Mr. Grinenko expressed hope that the legal approaches initiated by the international community and cooperative efforts between law enforcement officials would eventually have some effect, but felt that a great deal of effort should be invested in exposing the younger generation to open democratic societies through exchange programs.

In conclusion, Co-Chairman Campbell stated that he and the Commission would continue to focus on ways to combat bribery and corruption in the OSCE region. The Senator has called for the convening of an OSCE ministerial meeting to pursue practical forms of cooperation in this endeavor, and he, along with Commission Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), and Ranking Member Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) have urged Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to seek agreement on such a ministerial during the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, Turkey in November. □



OSCE holds meeting on Roma issues

by Erika Schlager

On September 6, the OSCE held its third and final 1999 Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) in Vienna, Austria, at the seat of the Permanent Council.

Over 300 people participated in the meeting, including several non-governmental representatives from the United States. The U.S. Delegation was headed by Ambassador David Johnson, head of the U.S. Mission to the OSCE, joined by staff from the U.S. Embassies in Prague and Bratislava, from the Department of State's Bureau on Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and from the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The working languages were English and Romani.

Background

As part of an effort to enhance its review of the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments, the OSCE Permanent Council decided on July 9, 1998 (PC DEC/241) to restructure (by, in effect, tightening the schedule for) the Human Dimension Implementation Meetings periodically held in Warsaw. In addition, it was decided to convene annually three informal SHDMs in the framework of the Permanent Council. Holding these meetings in Vienna, at the site of the weekly meetings of the Permanent Council—the OSCE's standing decision-making body—is intended to foster greater

consideration of human dimension issues by the Permanent Council.

The subjects for the SHDMs are to reflect key substantive issues raised at the previous Human Dimension Implementation Meeting or Review Conference. The selection of topics is made by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. For 1999, the chosen topics were religious liberties (March), "gender" issues (June), and Roma and Sinti issues (September).

The SHDM on Roma and Sinti Issues

In 1994, the OSCE had convened a seminar on Roma and Sinti human rights issues. In addition, the New Jersey-based Project on Ethnic Relations had organized side events on Romani concerns at the 1997 and 1998 implementation meetings. All human dimension issues, including human rights violations of the Roma, can be discussed at the regular, annual implementation fora.

The opening plenary session of the SHDM on Roma and Sinti Issues was moderated by Norwegian Ambassador Leif Mevik. Following introductory remarks by Nicolae Gheorghe, OSCE Advisor on Roma Issues, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoep, presented the keynote speech in which he profiled the results of his year-long study of Roma issues in the OSCE. Van der Stoep

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emphasized that “discrimination and exclusion are a fundamental feature of the Roma experience” and presented preliminary recommendations for OSCE participating States and the OSCE as an organization to address problems faced by Roma. (A full report by the High Commissioner is expected to be released in conjunction with the OSCE summit of Heads of State or Government, to be held in Istanbul in November 1999.)

The Vienna meeting was divided into two working groups. Working group 1 focused on “Roma and Sinti policies from ideas to implementation: putting ‘best practices’ in the Human Dimension into operation.” Government representatives from Finland, Romania, and Slovakia, at the request of the ODIHR, began the meeting by outlining their government’s approach to Roma issues. In addition, prepared statements were presented by representatives of the European Roma Rights Center (a Soros Foundation-funded, Budapest-based NGO) and the Project on Ethnic Relations (a New Jersey-based NGO). Although intended to jump start and help direct constructively the discussion, NGOs complained that government representatives held the floor for too long and failed to reflect realistic self-criticism. A statement by the Hungarian delegation, for example, largely rehashed information that had been circulated at previous OSCE meetings. A written statement by the Czech delegation failed to mention important legislative initiatives, including the recent passage of a civil law to prohibit discrimination against Roma in employment or changes to the citizenship law designed to end exclusion of Roma. (The failure to mention the amendment to the citizenship law was

particularly striking, given that the Czech citizenship law has been consistently criticized at OSCE meetings since its adoption in 1993.) The Czech statement also failed to mention plans by local authorities in Usti nad Labem to build a wall around its Romani citizens, effectively condemning them to live in a ghetto.

Not surprisingly, Romani NGOs ignored the “best practices” rhetoric, apparently reflecting the widespread belief that there really are no “best practices”—only “least bad practices” or, exceptionally, “isolated instances where good triumphs over evil and somehow the right thing gets done.” In any case, notwithstanding having been admonished by the organizers to make nice, NGOs proceeded to raise a variety of criticisms, generally directed at their own countries. One of the most common concerns voiced by Roma participating in the meeting was discrimination against Roma in the education systems.

Illustrating the increasing practice of Roma to speak for their ethnic kin beyond their own borders, Romani Rose (from Germany) voiced concern for the Roma of Kosovo and the Slovak Roma flood victims. He also criticized the language of the 1998 Oslo ministerial document’s “class[ification of] the entire Sinti and Roma population in Europe as an ‘integration problem.’ ... in the Central Council’s [of German Sinti and Roma] view, the OSCE Ministerial Council would not characterize any other minority in Europe like this.”

Although the organizers of this meeting had anticipated that working group 1 would address several specific aspects under the “best practices” rubric—participation of Roma in policy making; policing issues; international/multinational cooperation;

and asylum—participants failed to exhaust even the first of these four points. Asylum issues, to the regret of many, were not discussed at all.

The second working group focused on “confronting crisis situations: building and implementing a platform for action to approach new problems in emergency situations”—in short, a forum to address the plight of Roma in and from Kosovo.

Organizers of this working group had expected to focus primarily on ways in which the OSCE Mission in Kosovo might address Romani concerns in the field. Roma, however, used the meeting first and foremost as an opportunity to underscore what those concerns were. Roma from Kosovo, for example, described the ways in which they had been the victims of ethnically motivated violence and the targets of retaliation for alleged cooperation with Serbs. They argued that U.N. forces had failed to protect Roma from violence. NGOs also discussed the particular concerns of Roma asylum seekers from Kosovo. Although Roma are not safe in Kosovo, refugee camps in Macedonia are about to close, leaving some 3,000 Roma from Kosovo with no where to go.

Working group participants made a number of suggestions on ways these problems might be addressed or alleviated, including training OSCE Mission members on issues relating to Roma, seconding Romani staff to the OSCE Mission, and establishing lines of communication between Roma and KFOR.

A closing plenary included presentations by moderators summing up the recommendations made in their respective working groups and final comments from governments and non-governmental organizations.

One of the most striking moments of the meeting came when a schism within the Romani civil rights movement—not over substance but over tactics—became public. During working group 1, Romani Rose had described a letter signed by numerous prominent public figures and published by *The New York Times* and *Die Welt* in April 1999 protesting the special registration of Roma and Sinti in Bavarian police files. During the closing remarks when the compelling plight of Romani refugees from Kosovo came up, a representative of the Roma National Congress disparaged such an approach to human rights advocacy. “Forget letters!” he argued, urging instead: “Roma—get up on your feet! Stand up and demonstrate!” His remarks were met with cheers.

Conclusions

The third and final SHDM of 1999 suffered from some of the same organizational flaws that undermined the first and second meetings, particularly an overly broad agenda that could not be effectively addressed within the limited time allotted for this meeting. NGOs criticized the meeting for failing to “produce concrete results” and being too full of uncritical, self-serving statements by governments. A few government representatives complained after the meeting that they could not understand the points made by Roma—a phenomenon that often occurs when Roma make points that governments do not want to hear.

There were, however, some positive aspects of the meeting. First and foremost, it provided an opportunity for Roma to register human rights concerns before the OSCE’s principal decision makers. This was especially important with respect to

the OSCE’s ongoing engagement in Kosovo. Second, it provided a forum for Roma to meet across borders, exchange views on common issues of concern, and to learn more about the OSCE. Finally, the meeting offered some symbolic, but important victories: the third SHDM offered exemplary interpretation between Romani and English at a time when some OSCE government officials denigrate the Romani language, history and culture (see, for example, *Story on Hungary’s Gypsies ‘ill-informed, malicious’*,” letter to the editor of *The Washington Times* by Hungarian Ambassador Geza Jeszenszy, in which he dismisses “Gypsy” as “not a modern written language”). □

Remarks at the OSCE Supplemental Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti Issues

Ambassador David T. Johnson, The Hofburg, Vienna, September 6.

Ambassador Mevik, I would like to thank you, as the representative of Foreign Minister Vollebaek, for scheduling this meeting. We say a lot about wanting OSCE to be in the vanguard of early warning. Today’s meeting gives that pledge a ring of truth. The challenges of Roma and Sinti throughout our region cry out for attention, and for a common effort to counter the discrimination our Roma citizens face. I would also like to thank today’s special interpreters who have so ably taken on a special challenge.

I also want to commend Mr. van der Stoep for the exemplary craftsmanship of the report and recommendations he presented at today’s meeting. His address provides an important framework for OSCE States to address the conditions of Romani communities in our countries.

Ultimately, of course, changes must be made at the national level. International organizations cannot adopt anti-discrimination laws, create a climate of tolerance, discipline police who brutalize Roma or fail to protect them, or end school segregation. But the OSCE can be a partner for those countries seeking to tackle these problems. And it can make clear that current practice falls far short of the standards to which we have all pledged. The report of the High Commissioner provides useful guidance to help us address that challenge.

I also wish to thank the Romani non-governmental organizations that have participated in today’s meeting. The unprecedented public participation in this SHDM underscores the need for greater attention to be paid to Romani human rights issues by the OSCE. This is particularly true in the context of our work in Kosovo, where Roma experience unique vulnerabilities.

Although the crisis in Kosovo warrants our focused attention, we cannot allow it to overshadow the many other places where Roma face human rights violations each day. Those situations may not grab headlines, but we ignore them at our own peril. The discrimination Roma face in every walk of life must be remedied. That remedy should begin with adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination and equal protection laws in those countries which do not already have them. And it should be supplemented by educational programs and political leadership that makes clear that Roma are citizens, and they have rights, just like everyone else.

Finally, I wish to thank Mr. Nicolae Gheorghe, for his dedication and tireless work since assuming his

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position at the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Roma communities are found in virtually all OSCE States. In most cases, they are both an integral part of a larger society, as well as a distinct culture within that society. What we are dealing with here today are Roma who, through hardship and discrimination, are prevented from fully participating in the societies in which they live. We believe the OSCE can and should help. We must take an active approach toward ending discrimination. We cannot expect overnight miracles and we cannot be afraid to make mistakes.

First, we need the goodwill and the advice of the Roma to succeed. Second, we know from experience that good legislation can make a difference. Active enforcement of existing and new laws is necessary. Finally, leadership is crucial; it is the key ingredient. Without it, these other steps become only window dressing.

I remember the newspaper photo of former Austrian Chancellor Vranitzky in 1995, shaking the hand of the leader of the Roma community just south of Vienna after members of their community had been injured during a bomb attack against "outsiders." By his well-publicized gesture, the chancellor sent the clear message that this would not be tolerated in his Austria.

I also think of the recent courageous article by Kosovar journalist Veton Surroi. It called on the Kosovo community to end the reign of ethnic terror which has gripped Kosovo for too long. He wrote that he knew how the Roma felt because he himself, just weeks before, had been the target of ethnic cleansing. Action against people, only on the basis of their ethnicity, he termed "fascism."

But there are also stories of people reaching beyond their prejudices as well. A recent article in the British newspaper *The Guardian*, describing ethnic hatred in Kosovo, concluded with this anecdote: a class of 25 Roma children had met in an old barracks as the school year began. Their teacher, an ethnic Albanian named Berisha was not a trained educator but a former power station worker. But he knew the important lessons. Said Mr. Berisha of his students, "All I want is for everybody to be treated equally, and have the freedom to go to school. I want to tell the world where we are and what we do."

If we can do half as well, we should be satisfied.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, many of you have asked us if there are Roma communities in the United States. The answer is a definite "yes." We estimate over one million U.S. citizens are Roma. They have immigrated to the United States since colonial times. We are also working to overcome discrimination against Roma. It has been only in this decade that the last of the anti-Roma state laws have been removed. Roma tell our Congress that they continue to face racial profiling as well as stereotyping in the media. These are the problems we are working to address. Such issues require not only vigilance, but also effort to overcome the legacy of the past.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Excerpts from Remarks at OSCE Supplemental Human Dimension Meeting on Roma and Sinti Issues

OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Max van der Stoep, The Hofburg, Sept. 6.

For too long the Roma have been swept under the carpet. But no one

who lives in this part of the world can be unaware of the problems, or at least the symptoms. The problems include intolerance, mutual distrust, poor housing, exclusion, unemployment, undereducation and systematic discrimination. In a classic downward spiral, each of these problems exacerbates the others.

... One thing that I can say plainly and unequivocally: discrimination and exclusion are fundamental features of the Roma experience.

The report was prompted by two interrelated concerns. First, in the period since my last [1993] report, and notwithstanding notable steps by a few institutions, conditions of Romani communities in Europe have, in many key respects, continued to deteriorate. Second, despite the seriousness of the problems now confronting Roma, neither the OSCE nor its participating States have devoted the attention or resources to this issue that are plainly warranted.

It should be a priority for governments of OSCE States that still allow such practices to put an end to the abhorrent and degrading practice of inappropriately putting Roma children into so-called "special schools" for mentally disabled children. This practice effectively stunts the mental growth of these pupils, stigmatizes them and leaves them, from an early age, in a disadvantageous position in relation to their peers. Such schools are a blight on countries that condone them and do not belong in civilized societies. □

Report on Russian media in light of the upcoming elections

by Chadwick R. Gore

In the Russian media, the battle for influence continues to escalate in anticipation of the approaching parliamentary and presidential elections. Media moguls and government officials alike exploit their newspaper, radio, and television holdings as instruments of political and economic power. The intense pressure Russian media organizations face from politicians and financial magnates jeopardizes Russia's fulfillment of her Helsinki Final Act obligations to permit and protect the free media.

Russian journalists hoped to gain independence as the threat of communist censorship faded. However, high operating costs, low advertising revenues, and an indigent audience hindered the ability of media outlets to independently finance production and distribution. Nonetheless, the Russian press was vibrant and diverse, at least until 1996 when Russia's most powerful bankers and industrialists joined in "voluntary unification" to ensure Boris Yeltsin's reelection. Afterwards, when the lucrative sales of Russia's state assets ignited public disputes, the media increasingly reflected political biases and the battles of the business concerns controlling them. Throughout 1997, powerful financial groups invested heavily in the media market, despite the absence of revenues. Their aim was control of editorial lines to serve as conduits for self-promotion and political influence.

The August 1998 economic crisis exacerbated journalists' monetary troubles. As businesses struggled, advertising receipts deteriorated even

further and the financial independence of most media organizations disintegrated. While some editorial collectives managed to retain formal ownership, few avoided accepting assistance from business and industrial circles. Financial moguls compounded ownership of the majority of Russian media organizations.

The majority shareholding of the news media by major politicians and businessmen is a paramount obstacle to independent journalism in Russia. Media owners manipulate journalists and exact docility through bribes, libel suits, and threats, thereby forcing journalists to practice self-censorship. Russia's media tycoons frequently "behave like the worst censors," asserted President Boris Yeltsin in May 1998. He complained that the power-hungry media owners "openly interfere in editorial policy, determining what can be written or said, and what cannot. As a result, the people's right to objective, accurate information is jeopardized."¹

The Government's Influence

The Russian Government at all levels persists in depriving journalists of information, in using accreditation procedures to limit access, in removing journalists from their jobs, and in bringing libel suits, according to the U.S. State Department. Political clans have leverage over editorial integrity because media depends on favorable conditions and direct or indirect state funding and support. In fact, the government owns 80 percent of the printing presses and means of communications in Russia. Media is vulnerable to unpredictable changes in tax col-

lection. Journalistic objectivity disintegrates when journalists rely upon political patronage.

Next, Russia retains criminal defamation statutes. Last year President Yeltsin broadened the "List of Information that Constitutes a State Secret." In 1998, the government brought more than 250 lawsuits against journalists for unfavorable coverage of government policy or operations.² Judges typically are unwilling to challenge powerful federal and local officials; stiff fines and occasional jail terms reinforce tendencies toward self-censorship.

Regional newspapers are becoming less independent, and an increasing number of regions receive information only from government-run media organizations. Nizhni Novgorod Governor Ivan Sklyarov in June signed a decree providing impoverished local newspapers with paper, but requiring them to "regularly publish material about the activities of the oblast's administration in stabilizing the social situation of the oblast and fulfilling the governor's election campaign program."³ In Krasnoyarsk Krai, *Izvestiya* reports that the new sleekly produced paper openly "propagandizes" on behalf of the mayor and other leading industrialists in the region.

In Russia, journalism is a dangerous profession. During the first half of 1998, at least sixteen Russian murders of journalists were proven to be directly related to the journalistic work of the victims. Many more were beaten while investigating and expos-

please turn to next page

ing corruption, drug trade, and criminal structures in government and banks.⁴

In May 1998, the government increased its leverage over the media by consolidating its central and local television and radio companies into an enlarged company, the All-Russia Television and Radio Company (VGTRK). Mikhail Lesin, a former presidential public relations chief who worked on President Boris Yeltsin's 1996 re-election campaign, was appointed VGTRK head.

Last July, President Yeltsin created the Ministry for Press, Broadcast and Mass Media to "develop state policy" on media and advertising. "I wouldn't say that we want to create a propaganda ministry," Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin told a Cabinet meeting on July 6, "but we are starting to create a federal strategy that would consolidate all of the state's capabilities in—pardon the old-fashioned word—ideological work."

On July 13, Stepashin retracted his earlier statements and said the ministry would perform "not ideological, but managerial, technological, and legal tasks." The ministry will develop "unified norms and rules of the game in mass communications, so that there is no situation when we give frequencies to some people and not to others; that we give credits to some and not to others, that we like some oligarches and dislike others." Among the tasks for the new ministry are to: register all Russian mass media organizations; develop licenses and certificates on standards for audio, video, and advertising equipment; regulate radio and television broadcast frequencies, including communications and satellite orbital positions;

regulate the production and distribution of audio and video products; and distribute subsidies.

This move concentrates all the government's communication capacities, both in print and broadcast media, under the strong management hand and political control of a longtime Kremlin insider Mikhail Lesin. He sees his new job as forcing news outlets to serve the interests of the state.⁵ "There is no doubt that mass media today have a lot more ways to influence the state than the other way around," remarked Lesin on 22 July. "That is why protection of the state from free mass media is a very pressing issue today."

Then Prime Minister Stepashin said he was fully aware that television and radio play an important role in influencing voters' opinions, that the new ministry will create conditions for "healthy competition and a normal climate" that will allow Russia to hold "honest and transparent" elections. Sergei Markov, an independent political analyst with the Institute for Political Studies, said the ministry would try to put the Kremlin's stamp on the output of regional newspapers and broadcast stations, which now are controlled by local governors, many in alliance with Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov. "There can be no other reason for the new ministry," said Andrei Richter, director of the Media Law and Policy Center of Moscow State University. "The Kremlin is obviously getting ready for the elections. Lesin has helped in the past, and now his skills are being called upon once again."⁶

The Media Moguls

According to financial magnate Boris Berezovsky, "It is in the state's interests, therefore in the public's

too," to instill in the public's mind the concepts of market reform and to lobby for the interests of business.⁷ With the belief that the media will play a critical role in determining the successor of President Yeltsin, throughout the summer of 1999 Berezovsky has steadily amassed an array of media assets. In July he acquired controlling interest in Russia's prestigious *Kommersant* newspaper, widely regarded as Russia's most authoritative and independent daily newspaper. Berezovsky promised not to meddle in daily news coverage, and would "try to have influence only at the level of choosing political priorities."⁸ On August 6 he proclaimed the *Kommersant* indispensable in preventing Yevgeny Primakov and Yuri Luzhkov from winning Russia's presidency.

Berezovsky's influence will be dampened by Primakov and Luzhkov's anti-Kremlin Fatherland-All Russia coalition. One of Luzhkov's main promotional and popularity tools is "Center TV," founded in 1997 with financial backing from the Moscow city government. Luzhkov's network serves as a vehicle for national consolidation and will differentiate, the viewers' perception, Moscow and its mayor from the Kremlin and Russia's Government. Vladimir Gusinsky, who personally owns 70 percent of shares in the prodigious Media-Most empire, increasingly supports this coalition.

Berezovsky's papers have been exchanging allegations of corruption, theft, and conspiracy with Gusinsky's media for weeks. In mid-July, Gusinsky's NTV implicated the presidential chief of staff, Alexander Voloshin, in various financial scams. The next day, Gusinsky's publishing house was visited by the tax police. Berezovsky

went on his ORT station to warn that Gusinsky was a “dangerous” man because too much media is concentrated in his hands. Media-Most outlets then did their best to spread an intense wave of speculation concerning the plans of the Kremlin to obtain full control of budgetary financial flows as well as the cash flows of key monopolies. On August 24, fire inspectors shut down the *Kommersant* until Prime Minister Vladimir Putin intervened.

The editors of 14 leading Russian news publications warned President Yeltsin in an open letter the first week of August that “high-ranking officials are putting pressure on the mass media and on journalists ... [by] using their official clout and even the name of the Russian president.”⁹ In this letter, the editors accuse Kremlin insiders of ordering unwarranted tax raids and making other threats against independent news media that take an independent line in reporting the upcoming elections.

Conclusion

Russian media outlets engaged in hard news reporting have feeble prospects for becoming financially self-sufficient anytime soon. Until independent media managers cooperating with journalistic teams appear, little can diminish the power of corporate owners. In 1996, the Russian media was able to decide for itself how to cover events and campaigns. But leading up to the 2000 Presidential elections, journalists no longer enjoy a free editorial policy. One must read newspapers from several different media oligarchies to gather all the information.

The Russian media was headed in a more desirable direction six or

seven years ago, with a better economic situation and before media organizations fell into the clutches of powerful financial and industrial conglomerates. Although true of nearly all media in some form, the demand by Russian politicians and by media moguls for power and influence compromises revelatory, investigative, and truthful journalism. The Russian government must permit and protect the independent media in Russia in order to ensure freedom of speech and freedom of the press in preparation for the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections.

¹ Floriana Fossato, “Russia: Kremlin Steps Up Pressure On The Media,” RFE/RL Reports, 27 May 1998.

² Reported by the Glasnost Defense Foundation, in U.S. State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, “Russia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998,” 26 February 1999.

³ *Izvestiya*, 25 June 1999.

⁴ U.S. State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, “Russia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998,” 26 February, 1999.

⁵ Fred Weir, “Media Key to Kremlin Battle Plan,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 9 August 1999, p. 6.

⁶ Masha Hedburg, “Yeltsin Sets Up New Press Ministry,” *Moscow Times*, 7 July 1999.

⁷ Floriana Fossato and Anna Kachkaeva, “Russia: TV Channels As Tools Of Political Consolidation—An Analysis,” *RFE/RL Reports*, 20 May 1997.

⁸ Andrew Higgins, “Russian Newspaper Finds Itself In a Tug of War Over Ownership,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 9 August 1999, A15.

⁹ Fred Weir, “Media Key to Kremlin Battle Plan,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 9, 1996, p.6.

Note: Maegan Plegge provided significant research and writing for this article.

The view from Vienna

by Janice Helwig

The OSCE Permanent Council (PC) resumed its work on August 26 after a brief summer break. The PC, composed of the Ambassadors of all the participating States, is the regular decision-making body for the day-to-day work of the OSCE and meets weekly in Vienna. The PC discusses current events, debates and/or takes decisions on the operation of the OSCE, and receives regular briefings from OSCE Heads of Mission.

The head of the OSCE Mission in Tajikistan, Romanian Ambassador Buhoara, reported to the August 26 PC on his work. In addition to facilitating political dialogue between the government and opposition, the Mission has been active in helping to establish an ombudsman institution, revive local print media, and support the rights of women. The Mission has been conducting a training program for political party leaders, and plans to conduct a training program for journalists on covering an election campaign.

Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia, Woltman discussed the progress of the draft permanent election law. The OSCE Mission has conducted an extensive public education campaign in Bosnia to familiarize Bosnian citizens with key elements of the draft. (The draft law would retain a proportional system, but replace the current closed list system with an open list system, preferential voting, and meet the need for parties to obtain cross-entity support.) The law should be in place for the next na-

tional elections in late 2000. The OSCE Mission has also been working on several rule of law and judicial reform projects.

Several delegations (including the U.S. and Finland for the EU) raised concern at the August 26 and September 2 PC meetings that the trials and convictions on August 18 of six Uzbek dissidents accused in connection with a series of bombing in Tashkent last February were not conducted properly. On a positive note, the U.S. noted that Uzbekistan recently pardoned six persons for charges relating to violations of the restrictive religion law. The U.S. and EU also expressed concern over procedures relating to the conviction and sentencing of Turkmen dissident and former parliamentarian Tanrikuliev. (Tanrikuliev is one of the most likely opponents to run against the ruling party in upcoming parliamentary elections.) The Ambassador of Turkmenistan to the OSCE claimed that the matter was a criminal, rather than political one.

The Head of the OSCE Mission in Croatia told the September 2 PC he is concerned about inter-ethnic tension in the Danube region and preparations for upcoming parliamentary elections (expected to take place in January). Serb residents of the Danube region are subject to ethnic intimidation and assaults; on August 9, a Serb was beaten to death. As a result, Serbs increasingly are leaving the area. On elections, the Mission is concerned about lack of progress on

a new election law. The Croatian Ambassador to the OSCE said the opposition has impeded agreement on new electoral legislation, but the ruling HDZ will propose its own law. In response to concern raised by the EU that Croatia is not cooperating fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the Croatian Ambassador emphasized that his country takes its obligations to the ICTY seriously and will continue to work to improve cooperation with the ICTY.

Head of the OSCE Mission in Georgia, French Ambassador Lacombe, told the September 2 PC that the Mission is preparing to observe parliamentary elections in October and presidential elections next April. Slow progress is being made in South Ossetia, with refugee return, economic rehabilitation, and customs control key obstacles to a settlement.

The PC also held a formal discussion of a report prepared by CiO representative German Ambassador (and former OSCE Secretary General) Hoeynck on increasing OSCE involvement in Central Asia. Hoeynck proposes more programs to address the economic, environmental, and security concerns of the Central Asians, while continuing to work on building respect for human rights, democracy, and rule of law. The discussion will continue as part of the preparations for the November OSCE Summit, which will take place in Istanbul. □

Tentative ODIHR Election Schedule

December 1999-2000

Turkmenistan	Parliamentary Election	December 12
Russian Federation	Parliamentary Election	December 19
Croatia	Parliamentary Election	late December (TBC)
Uzbekistan	Parliamentary Election	January 9, 2000
Tajikistan	Presidential Election	Winter-Spring 2000 (TBC)
Kyrgyzstan	Parliamentary Election	Spring 2000 (TBC)
Georgia	Presidential Election	April 9, 2000
Russian Federation	Presidential Election	June 2000
Romania	Presidential/Parliamentary Election	September 2000
<i>(TBC — to be confirmed)</i>		

1999 OSCE PA Prize for Journalism And Democracy to international reporter Christiane Amanpour

The Leadership of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly awarded the 1999 OSCE Prize for Journalism and Democracy to the International Reporter, Christiane Amanpour. The prize—consisting of \$20,000—is awarded annually by the Assembly to journalists who, through their work, have promoted OSCE principles on human rights and democracy. In 1996, the Prize was awarded to the Polish journalist Adam Michnik, in 1997 to the organization “Reporters sans Frontières,” and last year to British writer and journalist Timothy Garton Ash.

CNN Chief International Correspondent Christiane Amanpour earned her reputation as a world-class correspondent beginning with her cov-

erage of the dramatic changes which occurred in the OSCE region during 1989 and 1990. She closely followed and reported on the break-up of the former Soviet Union and the subsequent crisis in Georgia. Having spent years on one of the most dangerous assignments journalists have faced in recent history, Ms. Amanpour brought the Bosnian tragedy into context by her courageous and straightforward reporting. She brought the world face to face with the death, destruction and incredible human suffering brought on by state-sponsored ethnic cleansing, and the international community's hesitancy to confront such evil. As the tragedy in Kosovo unfolded, Ms. Amanpour was again on the front lines. Her bravery, professionalism

and the sensitivity of her reporting stand as a model for free, independent journalism in the OSCE region.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly established the Prize for Journalism and Democracy in 1996, at the initiative of Mr. Freimut Duve, former member of the German Bundestag and now OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. The purpose of the prize is to promote the principles of free journalism as laid down by the OSCE Budapest Declaration in 1994.

The prize was presented to Christiane Amanpour *in absentia* during the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session on July 6 in St. Petersburg. The Assembly is composed of 317 Members of Parliament from 54 countries. □

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